

That is the cry of the season. I surrender. I surrender all to You, Jesus. And over these past few weeks, I've been thinking that if we want more of God, we have to give God more of us.

If I want more of God, I have to give God more of myself, because it's not God who is holding out on me. He has already offered me all of Himself to be filled to the full measure of His fullness. We're told that if we will give, that we will receive. And that if we seek, we will find. And that if we draw near to God, He will draw near to us. And He tells us, "When you seek Me with all your heart, then you will find Me." If we want more of God, we have to give God more of us.

Because it's really easy to sing, "I surrender all," while surrendering some. And the invitation is to surrender all. So, will you, with me, for the next few moments, will you just give God more of you? If we're called to love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength, what if we just take a moment and give Him those things of our life? Like, can we start with just your mind? Maybe if you want more of God, could you just, say like, God, I give You my mind. I want You have my mind. I don't even know what that means, and I don't know how to do it.

And I know You won't come and take it, but I can release it to You. So, God, I give You my mind. And God, I give You my heart. The very center of who I am, my will, my choices, my decisions. God, I give You my heart. You won't come and take it, but I can release it to You. So, I choose to surrender my heart. And God, I give You my body, this body that You've given me authority over. A place where I rule and reign, and You won't come and take it, but I can offer it to You as a living sacrifice. And You will gladly receive it.

God, I offer You this body. And then, I give You my soul. The deepest part of me. The part of me, Lord, that if I'm honest, I myself don't even understand. And You won't come and take it. You won't come and force it. You won't come and steal it. You wait for me to release it. To give it. To offer it. And so can you just say, God, I give You my soul. I want to give You more of me, because I long for more of You. In this moment, I surrender.

Maybe not all, because I don't know how and I don't know that I can, and I don't know that I'm ready yet, but I surrender more. How about that? Could you pray that to the Lord? Maybe not I surrender all, but I surrender more. I let go a little bit of the things that I've been holding on to. You won't come and take them. But You will gladly and joyfully receive them when I open up. And so, Lord, we surrender more, because we want more of You. Come and stir up within our hearts and our lives a hunger and thirst for righteousness, because you promised to come and fill us with more of Yourself. By faith, we believe that You have just released more of Yourself to us, as we have given more of ourselves to You.

Why don't you go ahead and grab your seat with me for a moment. Welcome to Valley Creek. We're glad you're here with us today. And we've been in this series called A Different Way. A big series, talking about living our lives the way that Jesus did. And in a sense, we've kind of

finished up Season One of this series. If you think of your favorite show, it has different seasons, well, we've kind of just finished up Season One, which was the foundation, which was the vision, which was trying to lift up your eyes and call to the deep things in your heart. And before we move on to Season Two, which is going to be the practices, which I know so many of you are ready to get to, we just have to stop for a moment and reflect, and think, and make sure we're aware of what God has been saying to us.

See, it's really hard to train if you don't know why you're training or what you're training for. And it's really hard to start to practice if you don't really want to play in the game. And so, sometimes we have to just stop and reflect, and contemplate, and think, and remind ourselves of what the Lord has been speaking and saying and doing. You see, you can't be a disciple if you're always in a hurry. If a disciple is someone who becomes like Jesus, Jesus was never in a hurry. So, if I'm always in a hurry, it's going to be really hard to be His disciple.

And in our culture of speed, we don't ever slow down enough to reflect, to think, to contemplate. And I would guess that most of us over these last five weeks haven't spent a lot of time outside of our hour together reflecting and thinking and contemplating on what God is trying to do in our lives, not because we don't want to, but because our lives are so busy, we don't have the time or the space to. And yet, God has called us to think deeply about deep things. God has created you to be a deep thinker about deep things. The problem is, is we've been disciplined by the world to be shallow, and to be surface, and to be fast and just move on, as opposed to slowing down and actually reflecting.

God says, "Come now, let us reason together. Consider your ways. Give careful thought to your life. Examine your ways, how you're living, and test them and see if they are leading you to the path of life." And so, what I want to do for the next 25 minutes or so, is just give you a breath to take some time to actually reflect and think deeply about deep things by giving you this time back. And if you've been tracking in this series, you keep hearing me saying things like, following Jesus, it's about arranging and rearranging our lives around Him. This is an example of rearranging our lives around Him and what He is doing. We have an agenda, we have a plan. We have a calendar for this series.

And yet, we have to be willing to push all that to the side to arrange and rearrange our lives around what God is doing in the here and now, and actually be kingdom come kind of people that believes God is here, God is in the room, God is speaking, and He has been moving in my life over these past few weeks, and I don't want to miss it. Okay? So, can you just take a breath with me? I'm going to lead you through this a little bit, and here is how I just want to start. I just want to put up Matthew 11:28-30, one of the verses that we've been looking at in this series, and I just want to give you a few minutes to just read it. Think about it. What is God trying to say to you in this verse?

Now, I'm going to give you the same verse again, but in a different translation. Read it again, and see what the Holy Spirit wants to say to you.

One more time. I'm going to give you one more translation. Read it. What's God trying to say to you?

What a verse. I don't know where you are, and I don't know what's going on in your life, but what an invitation from Jesus to you.

Those aren't just ancient historical words in a book. Those words are living and active. The God of the universe speaking to you today. And that little five-minute run there was an example of thinking deeply about deep things, about contemplating, reflecting, refusing the shallow and surface answer, but desiring to go a little bit deeper into what God wants to say to me. And so, for the next 7-10 minutes or so, here's what I want to invite you to do is, if you have a journal and you've been taking notes, grab your journal. This is why I was hoping, why we wanted to make these for you in the first place is, it's one place where it's all contained together. If you don't have that, however you've been taking notes, or if you're new, I'm about to give you something here in a second, if you don't have one.

And for the next 7-10 minutes or so, I just want to give you the space to reflect on what God has been saying to you through these last five weeks. What notes have you taken? What Scriptures have jumped out? What words has He been speaking? What work has He been doing in your heart? And you might be amazed as you look at week one, you already forgot five weeks later what He was saying, and that was so impactful the hour you were in here. But then we forget about it when we go out there. Think of just some of the questions we've been asking so far in this series. Questions like, who are you becoming? And who do you want to become? Have you ever decided to be a disciple of Jesus? What is it that you want from Jesus? Who or what is discipling you? Are you happy with the direction your life is going?

And so, for the next few minutes, can you just look through your notes, reflect through the series. And if you're new and you're saying, "Today is my first day," or you're like, "I was only here one week, I don't know," just think on the question, who are you becoming, and who do you want to become? Holy Spirit, come move among us for these next few minutes.

What good is it to hear with no intent to obey, to listen without ever really trying to understand? To take notes without ever rereading them and reflecting on what it is that I was learning from God? And so, what I want to invite you to do now is, if you can in your journal, in one sentence, if you had to say, here is what the Holy Spirit is saying or doing in my life, right now, if you had to summarize in one sentence. This is thinking deeply about deep things.

This is good practice. If I came and saw you as soon as service is over in the atrium and I said to you, "Give me your one sentence, what the Holy Spirit has been saying or doing in your life,"

what is that one sentence? I want to invite you to actually write it down by faith. One summary of this last two months, here is what the Holy Spirit is saying or doing in a single sentence, or here is what He is inviting me to, or here's how He is moving in my life, here is how I'm experiencing Him, one sentence. What would that be?

And if you feel like you don't have one, then maybe your summary statement would be the Holy Spirit is just inviting me to be more aware of Him, or He is inviting me to just pay more attention to His work in my life, because I'm really not sure.

See, what we've just been doing together for the last 25 minutes or so, that's a different way. That's not "good American church." Some of you are like, "I know, because this isn't what I came for today." But that was just amazing kingdom come, because we just acted like God was real, God is here, and that God has been speaking to me. And we just acted like I'm actually on a journey with Jesus, moving with Him towards something, becoming someone different than I am today. And I just acted like I actually believe that my time in the gathering and having the word brought to my life is actually worth looking at and doing something with and, and responding and reflecting to, that was a great example of a different way, rearranging our lives, our time together, that didn't cost us much. It was just a little awkward maybe.

It was just a little uncomfortable maybe. It was just a little bit unknown, like I'm not sure where all this is going to go. And so, I just tried to demonstrate to you that all these practices that we're going to start, when they're done with the right heart, will be a little awkward and uncomfortable and unknown, but you can do it. In fact, if it was hard for you to just sit here in about 10 minutes of silence, that's a great question for you to reflect on. Why was it hard for me to sit in 10 minutes and think about what God has been saying to me? If that's you in your life, that should be the loudest siren you will ever hear in your life screaming to you of "Warning! Warning! Danger! Danger!" If your soul is that overwhelmed, that broken, that wore out, that disoriented, that trying to stay surface, I don't want to go in there.

That is God showing you, "Hey, there's something off here, invite Me in." Because sitting for 10 minutes to think about what God has been speaking to me is part of what being a disciple of Jesus is all about. And we did it with other people who are doing it with us at the same time. That's a great example of a different way. Let me try to pull this together for you in this. This week, a woman in our church shared with me what she believes is a prophetic word for our church in this season. And as she shared it, it super resonated with my soul because it's been things that I feel like the Lord has been speaking to me and showing me for us. And the, the prophetic word was that this is a season of open doors. A season of open doors, but not the kind of open doors we think of.

Normally, we think open doors, God opening doors for us, so we can go out. New opportunities, new breakthroughs, new relationships, new places to go. It's a season of God opening doors for us to step out and do all kinds of new great things. No, the open door is a

season of opening the door, not so we can go out, but so God can come in. In fact, Revelation 3:20, this is Jesus speaking, saying, "Here I am. I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with Me." If you've been in church for any period of time, you've probably heard this verse preached for salvation, for lost people that don't know Jesus. That's true. It's a great use of that verse. But in context, Jesus is speaking to the church here. This is not Jesus to the world.

This is Jesus to His own people, saying, "Hey, I'm here. I'm knocking on the door. And just so you understand, there's only a handle on the inside. I can't open it for you. I'm here. I'm knocking. I'm speaking, I'm talking. And if you want Me to come in, I can't open that door for you. You have the empowerment. You've been given free will. You have been given authority over your mind and heart and soul and body. So, will you open the door and let Me in? Will you invite My light into the dark places of your life?" Because if we're honest, there's a whole lot of dark places inside of us. Pride, fear, rebellion, unrepentant sin, anxiety, stress, worry, doubt, ungodly beliefs.

Shame, the pain of our past, there are so many rooms inside and we often allow God into the lobby when He wants to come into the basement. So, it's a season of open doors, not to go out, but to let Him in. And not just once, and not just in one place, but again, and again, and again, and again. Every door He knocks on, it's a season. There's a favor. There's an invitation from God to say, "Open up that door and let Me in. Open up that door and let Me in. Open up this door and let Me in." And that's what a different way life looks like, is letting Him into any and every place He wants to go in our lives. And with a little bit of fear and trembling saying, be gentle and humble with me in this, Lord. Be kind and compassionate in my pain.

Help me. When You come in this room, it's really dark. I don't even understand it. Can you bring Your light? And watch what He will do. And if we don't get this heartbeat as we move forward into the next part of this series, into Season Two and Season Three, it's going to get disorienting and it will be religious and it will be activities, and it will be things for things' sake. All of the practices that we're talking about are just ways of opening up the door and saying, it's a season of open doors. Come on in Jesus, into this place of my heart, the place that I'm even afraid of, the place that I don't even know how to control, but I'm inviting You in because You're here and You're knocking and You want to come in and eat with me deeply. You want to teach me how to live in Your kingdom in that room.

And You want to teach me how to become a person of love in that space. And so, if it's a season of open doors, I choose to let You in. And I'm starting by letting You in today by just being willing to slow down for 30 minutes and think deeply about deep things that actually matter, because I want to become a person of love, formed and shaped and molded into the image and likeness of Jesus. That's what church is about. And that's what life in the kingdom looks like. And this is the great invitation of a different way. Do the things that Jesus did. Jesus

always let the Father into any and every place of His life. There was no place the Father was not welcome.

If I want more of God, I got to give God more of me. May that be a word for your life and for our church in this season. And may we open the door as individuals and as a community to say, come Lord Jesus, come. So, thank You, Jesus, for Your goodness and Your grace. Thank You. But today, You are here and You are meeting with us. And so, we're willing to arrange and rearrange our lives around You, because we want to let You in. And I want You to do a deep work in my life. God, I confess and repent that so much of my life has been formed and shaped by the world to be shallow in surface and fast.

And You're inviting me to a life that is deep and profound and slow. And so today, even in maybe your uncomfortability in this room or the awkwardness for the, "I don't know about that," is God's gracious knocking on the door of your heart to say, "If you let Me in, I will bring you peace. Come all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest. Come learn from Me, for My way is easy and light." Jesus, lead us wherever we are and whatever pace we're at and whatever level of, of spiritual maturity we may be at in our journey today, would You lead us from that point.

Meet us where we are, God, and help us walk a different way one next step at a time. Thank You, Jesus, for Your presence. In Your name, we pray. Amen.